

## John Gordon, July 20, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### CAPTAIN JOHN GORDON'S REPORT OF HIS VISIT TO PENSACOLA.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the War Department files is a copy of this letter, forwarded to the Secretary of War by Jackson July 30, 1814, which differs from the original here given in being dated July 29, 1814, and in having better spelling.

July 20, 1814.

Agreably to your order I left Fort Jackson on the 14th and reached Pensacola on the 20th of July 1814 and delivered your letter to his Excellency the Governor of Pensacola who caled for me on the Evning of the same day and observed that the Genrals letter was Impertinant and contained a demand of two Indian Chiefs, namely Peter McQuene and Josiah Francis which he conceived as an Insult to the Goverment, and that the Spaniards would die before they would comply with such demand; on the contrary the nature of the demand and the circumstance of some Americans committing depredations on the Indians within the Teritorial limits of Spaine without the consent of the Government, would authorise him to Arm the Indians and furnish them with Provisions and Amunition which I understood him he ment doing. On the next day I saw the Indians Assembled on the public Square and held a Counsel for about four hours. The day following I saw the Indians agane assemble and draw provisions. I was told by some persons that they also drew Amunition but did not see it myself. Others in whome I had confidence said that they ware to receve Arms and Amunition as soon as I left the place, and that the Governors Answer to your letter was not to be confided to me, That he wished to gane time by the delay, that he Expected a considerable Milatary force from the Havanah and a large British force to take possession of all the Military posts on the Gulf in the month of September and with the assistance of their Indian Allies to be able to commence active Hostilities

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against the U. S. I was also informed by several confidential persons that some time past two British Armed Vessels, (a Frigate and Schooner) had landed at or near the mouth of the Appalatchucola and had delivered to the Indians between two and three Thousand Stands of Arms and a large Quantity of Amunition and assisted them in taking them some distance up the River to be distributed and then put to sea. Since which there had arrived three other Armed Vessels (two Brigs and a Schooner) and landed some where in the Neighbourhood of that place with a considerable number of Troops, were building a Fort and planing an Expedition against some of our Military posts on the Alabama to be carried on by six hundred British and what Indians can be collected in that Quater. I was informed that in a few days after Colo. Kerson left Pensacola that Peter Mcquene left that place for the Appelatchecola and had not returned, also that a British Armed Schooner had left that place for Appalatchacola the day before I reached it and had taken Josiah Francis on board. It was stated by all I conversed with that the Indians were much in the habit of killing and driving the Cattle belonging to the Citizens of the United States and I saw a party come in myself with Beef which they said they had taken from the inhabitants of the Tensaw. A rumor reached Pensecola the Evning before I left it that there was a Declaration of war by Spain against the United States but not certain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The following letters in the Jackson MSS. support the charge that the Spanish authorities in West Florida did not respect the principle of neutrality as to British operations against the United States, or as to Indian succor: John Jones to Col. T. H. Benton, July 4, 1814; John Turvin to the same, July 4, 1814; extract from a letter from Pensacola, July 12, 1814; S. H. Garrow to Maj. John Hinson, July 19, 1814; Harry Toulmin to Jackson, July 21, 1814; William H. Robertson and Charles Muir to Jackson, July 28, 1814; Capt. Parker McCobb's statement, Aug. 19, 1814; copies of two letters from Florida, Aug. 21 (?), 1814; and the statement of Antoine Collons, no date, ca. August, 1814. See also *Am. St. Papers, Indian Affairs*, I. 858–860.